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BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.



Interim Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR

1939

HEALTH COMMITTEE.

Chairman – – Councillor Dr. A. Frost.

His Worship the Mayor (Councillor F. A. Wadsworth, J.P.)
 Alderman P. Griffiths, J.P. Councillor D. C. Jackson.
 Councillor T. King. Councillor Dr. G. I. Lambe.
 Councillor Mrs. D. M. Wesson. Councillor L. Whitehouse, J.P.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

Chairman – – Councillor Dr. G. I. Lambe.

His Worship the Mayor (Councillor F. A. Wadsworth, J.P.)
 Alderman A. Beebee, J.P. Alderman P. Griffiths, J.P.
 Alderman J. Mark, J.P. Alderman A. H. Westbury, J.P.
 Councillor Mrs. M. Bayley, J.P. Councillor C. Collins.
 Councillor Dr. A. Frost. Councillor L. B. Gardner.
 Councillor T. Hollingsworth. Councillor D. C. Jackson.
 Councillor T. King. Councillor G. W. Price.
 Councillor Mrs. D. M. Wesson. Councillor L. Whitehouse, J.P.

Co-opted Members :

The Mayoress ; Mesdames Greenhough, J.P., Hollingsworth,
 Jackson, Price, Walton, Whitehouse and Wilson.

AILING BABIES AND CHILDREN'S HOSTEL SUB-COMMITTEE.

Chairman – The Mayoress.

Councillor Mrs. N. Bayley, J.P. ; Councillor Mrs. D. M. Wesson ;
 Mesdames Collins, Greenhough, J.P., Hollingsworth, Jackson,
 Walton, Whitehouse and Wilson.

The Borough of Wednesbury has been specified as a more vulnerable area under the Civil Defence (Specified Areas) Order, 1939, dated August 14th, 1939, made by the Lord Privy Seal under Section 12 of the Civil Defence Act, 1939 (2 and 3, Geo. VI., 6 c. 31).

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Medical Officer of Health and School Medical Officer :

A. H. Kynaston, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Assistant Medical Officer of Health and Assistant School Medical Officer :

Miss L. M. Allen, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Consultant Obstetrician :

J. S. M. Connell, F.R.C.S.

Veterinary Surgeon :

H. Yeomans, M.R.C.V.S.

Chief Sanitary Inspector :

H. Topping, A.R.S.I., F.S.I.A., M.Inst.P.C.

Additional Sanitary Inspectors :

A. H. Matthews, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

G. H. Suggitt, M.S.I.A.

Health Visitors and School Nurses :

Miss C. L. Evans, S.R.N., C.M.B. (Superintendent Health Visitor and Child Life Protection Visitor).

Mrs. A. E. Boffey, C.M.B.

Mrs. A. A. Timmins, S.R.N., C.M.B., H.V.Cert., R.S.I.

Miss S. E. Allan, S.R.N., C.M.B., H.V.Cert., R.S.I.

(Resigned 31/8/39).

Miss J. N. Wallace, S.R.N., C.M.B., H.V.Cert., R.S.I.

(Appointed 1/3/39.)

Miss A. Davies, C.M.B.

(Appointed 1/10/39.)

Clerks :

Chief Clerk : Mr. J. A. Jackson.

Miss D. Burgess.

Mr. J. W. Barber.

Miss M. H. Troman.

Mr. A. Higgs.

STAFF, AILING BABIES AND CHILDREN'S HOSTEL.

Hostel closed since 1st September, 1939.

TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS OF THE
BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present an Interim Annual Report on your Public Health Services for the year 1939.

Circular 2067 of the Ministry of Health, dated July 19th, 1940, states that in view of the increasing pressure of work in the Public Health Department of Local Authorities, and the need for strict economy in the use of paper, the Minister considers that interim reports only should be made for 1939—but that arrangements should be made for careful preservation of all records, including statistics supplied by the Registrar-General, in order that after the termination of the war a full report could be made for the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year, giving separate statistics for each year in order that annual records may be continuous and complete. The usual Tables which have been filed for reference are this year omitted and the report generally is much abridged.

During 1939 further recommendations of the Minister's report of March, 18th, 1938, were implemented; the services of the Obstetrical Emergency Unit of the County Borough of West Bromwich were made available for us from February 1st. We are grateful to our neighbour for placing these facilities at our disposal, and on March 1st an additional Health Visitor and School Nurse was appointed.

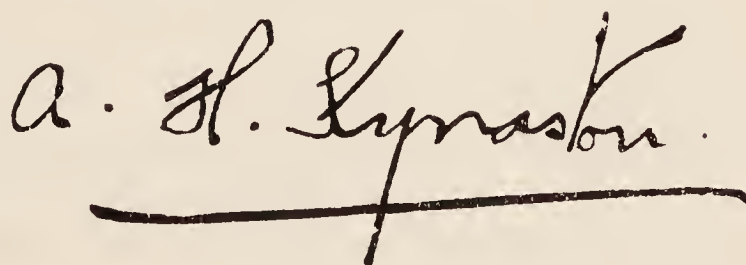
In February an Enquiry was held regarding the remaining houses in the Portway Road Area, approval of their demolition being received in July.

The long present threat of war and its declaration on the 3rd September brought into active use a new service—that branch of Civil Defence designated Air Raid Precautions—Casualty Services, which has occasioned much additional work since the submission of my first memorandum in October, 1937. The Scheme-making Authority for the Borough is the Staffordshire County Council.

I would desire to record my appreciation of the help and encouragement which I have received from my Chairmen and Committee members, to express to Dr. Allen, the Health Visitors, Clerical and Sanitary Department Staff, my thanks for their loyal support during a year full of calls for special service, and to acknowledge the ready co-operation of my colleagues in private practice and of the officers of other departments.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "A. H. Lynskey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Department,
Town Hall, Wednesbury.

November, 1940.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres)	2,025
Registrar-General's Estimate of:—	
(a) Resident population, mid-1939	33,650
(b) Average population appropriate to the calculation of death rates	33,390
Population : Census 1931	31,531
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1939) according to Rate Books	8,440
Rateable Value (1/10/1939)	£142,846
Estimated product of penny rate (1939—40) ...	£525

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

I am indebted to Mr. A. S. Morgan, Manager of the Employment Exchange, for the following statistics.

Unemployed at end of 1939 : Men (age 21 and over) 392 ; Young men (18—20 inclusive) 19 ; Boys (14—17 inclusive) 3 ; Women (age 21 and over) 168 ; Young women (18—20 inclusive) 9 ; Girls (14—17 inclusive) 7. Total : 598, made up of 375 wholly unemployed and 223 temporary stoppages or short time workers.

The figures for 1939 are the lowest since January, 1921.

Contributors to Unemployment Insurance (age 14—64) : 11,625 males and 2,855 females. Total : 14,480.

Mr. J. Parkes, Clerk to the Wednesbury Guardians' Committee, informs me that the number of persons in receipt of Public Assistance at 31st December, was : Medical relief only, 13 ; Outdoor relief, 418 ; Total, 431.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth Rate per 1,000
of the estimated
resident population.
Mid 1939.

	Total.	Males.	Females.	
Live Births :				
Legitimate ...	595	325	270	18.0
Illegitimate ...	13	7	6	
				Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.
Stillbirths :				
Legitimate ...	26	14	12	42.5
Illegitimate ...	1	—	1	
				Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated average population.
Deaths ...	385	217	168	11.5

Deaths from Puerperal Causes (headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's Short List) :—

	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.
No. 29—Puerperal Sepsis ...	—	
No. 30—Other Puerperal Causes	3	4.7
Total ...	3	

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—

All infants per 1,000 live births ...	57.5
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...	58.8
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...	—
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ...	51
Deaths from Measles (all ages) ...	2
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	1
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ...	5

The Vital Statistics for 1939 considered in relation to the Registrar-General's provisional figures for England and Wales are by no means unsatisfactory.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Facilities provided are as detailed in the Annual Report for 1938, save for the closing of the Corporation's Ailing Babies Hostel on September 1st.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Infant Welfare Centres.

Albert Street	Mondays and Thursdays	2-30 p.m.
King's Hill	Tuesdays and Fridays	2-30 p.m.
Mesty Croft	Mondays and Thursdays	2-30 p.m.

Attendances, 1939 :—

	Sessions.	New Cases.		Total Attendances.		
		Under 1 year.	1—5 years.	Under 1 year.	1—5 years.	All Ages.
Albert Street	98	152	27	3283	2645	5928
King's Hill	98	129	20	2906	1657	4563
Mesty Croft	100	204	66	3731	2928	6659
Total Attendances (all Centres)		...	...	...	...	17150
Percentage attendance notified live births		...	...	...	...	73.5

Despite war conditions and a certain amount of dislocation due to the King's Hill and Mesty Croft Centres being used as First Aid Posts, attendances have been well maintained and the appreciation of benefits conferred seem to be enhanced under present conditions. The Infantile Mortality Rate for the year 1939 is the lowest ever recorded for the Borough.

Ante-Natal Clinics.

	Sessions.	New Cases.	Total Attendances.
Albert Street	49	267	632
King's Hill	27	100	285

Number of women attending during year : 424.

Percentage of women confined who attended : 66.7

Institutional Treatment.

63 mothers were admitted to Hallam Hospital, 27 being referred through the Clinics, 36 by private practitioners.

Home Visits by Health Visitors.

To Expectant Mothers.		To Children under 1 year.		To Children between the ages of 1 and 5 years.
First Visits.	Total Visits.	First Visits.	Total Visits.	
111	251	685	2666	2956

Total visits (all purposes) : 5,873.

Midwives.

The Staffordshire County Council is the Local Supervising Authority under the Midwives' Act.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Two cases notified, in no instance did impairment of vision result.

Free Milk.

Liquid or modified dried milks were supplied as in previous years. Approximate cost being £158 19s. 9d.

Child Life Protection.

The Superintendent Health Visitor (Miss C. L. Evans) is the Child Life Protection Visitor. One child was under supervision at the end of the year.

Maternal Mortality.

The Rate is set out under Vital Statistics; all cases were subject to investigation and report.

Ailing Babies' Hostel.

The patients of the Hostel were discharged to their homes on the 1st of September—no provision for protection against air raids being available. Since the Hostel was opened there has been a great increase in facilities for treatment of the type of cases dealt with in neighbouring hospitals, and it is anticipated that there will be no lack of accommodation for patients who would have been accommodated in the Hostel. Up to the 31st of August admissions numbered 35.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.

Sources of supply are as detailed in the report for 1938. Bacteriological and chemical tests have proved satisfactory.

Drainage and Sewerage.

The medias of three choked percolating filters have been washed and re-graded.

Rainfall.

The total rainfall for the year was 30.34 inches.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.

Houses infested :	(a) Council Houses	...	29
	(b) Other Houses	...	37

In six cases the houses were found to be infested on more than one occasion. Method of disinfestation as detailed in 1938 Report.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

Slum Clearance.

On the 21st of February an Inquiry was held by Mr. H. L. Bloomfield, A.R.I.B.A., in regard to 165 houses comprised in the Wednesbury (Portway Road) Compulsory Purchase Orders, 1938, Nos. 1 to 12 inclusive. Housing Act, 1936, confirmation subject to minor modifications being received on July 6th.

Individual houses represented	...	...	26
Demolition Orders made	...	...	12
Undertakings accepted	...	...	11
Consideration deferred	...	...	3

During the year the number of houses demolished and persons displaced were :—

	Houses Demolished.	Persons Displaced.
Clearance Areas	128	489
Individual Demolition Order ...	115	573
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	243	1062
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Mr. Arthur Booth, F.R.I.B.A., M.I.M.C.E., M.I.Struct.E., Borough Surveyor and Architect, has given me the following particulars regarding houses erected by the Corporation :—

Number of houses erected from 1st January to 31st December, 1939.

(a) By the Corporation Housing Act, 1930 ...	71
(b) By Private Enterprise	182
	<hr/>
	253
	<hr/>

Number of houses erected from 1st January, 1919, to 31st December, 1939.

(a) By the Corporation :	
Housing Act, 1919	362
Housing Act, 1924	1060
Housing Act, 1925	11
Housing Act, 1930	1652
Cemetery Lodge	1
	<hr/>
	3086
(b) By Private Enterprise	1197
	<hr/>
	4283
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Of the houses built for Slum Clearance under the Housing Act, 1930, 18 were erected in 1933, 216 in 1934, 340 in 1935, 327 in 1936, 93 in 1937, 587 in 1938, and 71 in 1939.

Overcrowding.

At the beginning of the year 566 houses were scheduled as overcrowded in accordance with the standards of the Housing Act, 1936.

42 families, comprising 278 persons, were re-housed from 42 houses, apart from overcrowding abated as the result of slum clearance.

Small Dwellings Acquisition Act.

The Borough Treasurer, Mr. J. S. Hodges, F.I.M.T.A., A.S.A.A. reports that £4,940 was advanced in respect of 12 houses, and that since the Act was brought into operation £29,900 has been advanced in respect of 64 houses.

SECTION E.**INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.**

Statistics have been filed for presentation in next full report. Sampling under the Food and Drugs Act and under the Milk and Dairies Order has as heretofore been carried out by the Staffordshire County Council.

SECTION F.**PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.**

Cases notified : Scarlet Fever, 119 ; Diphtheria, 35 ; Enteric Fever, 1 ; Pneumonia, 67 ; Erysipelas, 20 ; Puerperal Pyrexia, 2 ; Cerebro-Spinal Fever, 2.

No disease assumed epidemic character, but measles and mumps were prevalent during the first five months. Whooping Cough and measles only became compulsorily notifiable from November 1st.

231 Throat swabs were sent to the County Laboratory for examination, 33 being positive for Diphtheria, 198 negative.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

This has been carried out as detailed in the report for 1938.

From September, 1936, to December 31st, 1939, 939 children have completed a course through the School Medical Service and 338 through Infant Welfare Centres. Particulars are as follows :—

	1—5 years of age.	5 years and over.
1936	32	165
1937	28	302
1938	68	168
1939	210	304

Hospital Accommodation.

No increased accommodation is yet available. On the 27th of March the South Staffordshire Joint Hospital District Act, 1939, received the Royal Assent.

Tuberculosis.	Respiratory.	Non-Respiratory.
New Cases : Males	20	7
Females	15	1
Deaths : Males	15	4
Females	5	1

At the end of the year 164 persons were on the Register.

	Respiratory.	Non-Respiratory.
Males	48	42
Females	60	14

During the year 161 Sputum Tests were carried out at the County Laboratory, 37 being positive, 124 negative.

Close co-operation is maintained with the Tuberculosis Officer (Dr. D. J. Loughran).

Vaccination.

Dr. G. E. V. Morris, the Public Vaccinator, has rendered the following return for the year 1939 :—

Births, 526 ; Vaccinations, 42 ; Declarations, 370 ; Insusceptibility, 1 ; Deaths, 20 ; Postponements, 15 ; Removals, 21. Cases to be dealt with by the Vaccination Officer, 57.

TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS OF
THE BOROUGH OF WEDNESBURY.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Circular 2067 of the Ministry of Health, dated 19th July, 1940, lays down that the Annual Report in respect of the year 1939 shall be regarded as an interim one and that the usual records and statistics shall be carefully preserved in order that after the termination of the war, a report may be made dealing more fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year, when the whole of the statistics for each year may be given, in order that the records may be continuous and complete. The usual Tables will not therefore be circularised this year.

1939 was a year of marked activity by the Sanitary Department and the services of a second Additional Sanitary Inspector were made full use of.

Particulars as to the provision of New Houses and of Slum Clearance and Demolition Orders, Overcrowding, Disinfestation, etc., will be found in the Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

The Inspectors of the Sanitary Department were fully employed in visits in connection with the Public Health Acts, Housing Acts, Factory Acts, Infectious Disease, Food Inspection, etc. Over 13,562 carcasses were inspected, and the weight of food condemned totalled 9 tons 5 cwts. Over 100 houses were represented for re-condition and repair.

Offensive Trades.

Two applications were received for the establishment of a fish frying business ; neither were granted.

Removal of Refuse.

The number of men employed was 26. Vehicles : one 3-ton and two 2-ton refuse collecting vehicles, five horses and carts, and one 1-ton Morris van (part-time). Total weight of refuse collected : 10,611 tons. Disposal, as in the past, was by means of controlled tipping.

This is the last Annual Report I shall have the honour of rendering to you, and I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks for the courtesy which you have always extended to me over a period of 33 years service to the Borough. From the general townspeople I have always received a kindly reception in what are oftentimes distasteful tasks, and I shall look back with pleasure in my retirement to the great progress which has been made in regard to the Sanitary and Health Services in the Borough during my years of office.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HERBERT TOPPING,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Sanitary Department,
Wednesbury.

November, 1940.

